

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 150524Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2789

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USDEL JEC PARIS

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 1759

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FBOR, VS, VN, CH, TW, RP

SUBJECT: GVN REAFFIRMS SOVEREIGNTY OVER PARACELS AND SPRATLYS

REF: SAIGON 2029 (141138Z FEB 74)

SUMMARY:

1. GVN ORGANIZED LOW-KEY PRESS CONFERENCE FEB 14 TO COMMEMORATE
ISSUANCE OF DECLARATION A YEAR EARLIER (REFTEL) REAFFIRMING RVN
SOVEREIGNTY OVER PARACEL AND SPRATLY ISLANDS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE
PRC MILITARY SEIZURE OF PARACEL GROUP. A NEW DECLARATION WAS
MADE REAFFIRMING THIS SOVEREIGNTY, AND A WHITE PAPER WAS ISSUED
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SETTING FORTH BASIS FOR RVN SOVEREIGNTY OVER BOTH PARACELS AND

SPRATLYS. EMPHASIS WAS ON RECOVERY OF ISLANDS BY REGOTIATION.

END SUMMARY.

2. AT PRESS CONFERENCE FEB 14 A GVN DECLARATION WAS READ (BY ASSISTANT TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS LE QUAN GIANG) RECALLING DECLARATION ONE YEAR EARLIER THE PARACELS AND SPRATLYS WERE INDIVISIBLE PART OF THE TERRITORY OF RVN IN SPITE OF

COMMUNIST CHINA'S SEIZURE OF THE FORMER. NEW DECLARATION CRITICIZED "VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS" FOR HAVING FAILED TO RAISE THEIR VOICES OF TAKE ANY ACTION AGAINST THE AGGRESSORS, IN CONTRAST WITH RESOLUTE RESISTANCE OF RVN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE. DECLARATION STATED THAT RECENT ACTIVITIES OF "PEKING AUTHORITIES" TO AFFIRM THEIR PRESENCE IN PARACELS COULD HAVE NO LEGAL EFFECT, RECALLED GVN STATEMENTS IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES REAFFIRMING GVN SOVEREIGNTY, AND ASSERTED RVN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE WOULD CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE TO RECOVER THEIR LEGITIMATE RIGHT.

3. 105-PAGE WHITE PAPER IS COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT OF GVN CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER TWO ISLAND GROUPS INCLUDING DOCUMENTS AND MAPS. PAPER COVERS HISTORICAL PROOFS, EFFECTIVE EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY FOR MANY YEARS INCLUDING LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS AND METEOROLOGICAL STATIONS, AND PAST DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS OF RVN TO ASSERT ITS SOVEREIGNTY. PAPER CONCENTRATES ON REFUTING PRC CLAIMS BUT DOES INCLUDE SOME MENTION OF ROC AND PHILIPPINE OCCUPATION OF CERTAIN ISLANDS IN THE SPRATLYS.

4. IN QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD GVN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY SPOKESMEN TOOK QUESTIONS. IT WAS CLEAR FROM THEIR REPLIES THAT GVN DOES NOT INTEND TO ATTEMPT TO SEIZE ISLANDS OCCUPIED BY OTHER NATIONS, BUT SEEKS TO SOLVE INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES PEACEFULLY AS STATED IN ITS FEB 14, 1974 DECLARATION, ESPECIALLY WITH FRIENDLY COUNTRIES SUCH AS ROC AND PHILIPPINES. ASKED ABOUT NATURE OF RECENT ACTIVITIES OF PRC IN PARACELS REFERRED TO IN DECLARATION, SPOKESMEN MENTIONED ARRIVAL OF A NUMBER OF OIL-DRILLING RIGS TO SEEK OIL IN PARACELS REGION, EXHIBITION OF HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A LOCAL ADMINISTRATION. MILITARY SPOKESMAN SAID PRC HAD ESTABLISHED STRONG DEFENDING FORCES BUT DECLINED TO GIVE FIGURES ON GROUNDS OF MILITARY SECRECY. CONFIDENTIAL

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ASKED WHY GVN DID NOT TAKE MATTER TO INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE, CIVILIAN SPOKESMAN SAID MATTER WAS UNDER STUDY AND THIS ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN WHEN TIME IS APPROPRIATE.

5. COMMENT: LOW-KEY PRESENTATION INDICATES GVN WISHES TO MAINTAIN ITS POSITION AND TO CONTINUE TO EXPLOIT THIS POPULAR ISSUE AGAINST DRV, WITHOUT SETTING OFF MAJOR DISPUTE WITH OTHER CLAIMANTS TO THESE ISLANDS. GVN PROBABLY ALSO DESIRES, IF POSSIBLE,

TO EXAERBATE DRV-PRC DIFFERENCES.

6. COPIES OF DECLARATION AND WHITE BOOK WILL BE POUCHED
DEPARTMENT (EA/VN), PEKING, HONG KONG, MANILA AND TAIPEI.
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